Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

homemakers' chat
FOR USE IN NON-COMMERCIAL BROADCASTS ONLY
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

"Beans for Wartime Food". Information from the Agricultural Marketing Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Wednesday April 29, 1942

--ooOoo--

Serve more baked beans, boiled beans, bean croquettes, bean soup, or beans any way you like 'em. That's my suggestion for today, and it's meant for all you homemakers who want to aid in the war program. I know you are wondering how using beans, of all things, can help in the war effort, but it's really rather simple when you look into the matter.

If you've been keeping up with the food news, you know that the U.S. Department of Agriculture has just stepped up its pork buying program -- stepped it up by quite a lot. And along with that news, you'll remember that the extra pigs raised because of the Food-for-Freedom campaign aren't big enough to market yet. So you can see there just isn't so much pork left for the rest of us, after we make allowance for our armed forces and the requirements for shipment of pork to our Allies. So we have to look for other foods -- at least for the time being.

That's why I mention beans. After all, our reasons for eating beans or pork are very similar. First, we like them. And second, equally important, they're both good foods for protein -- they're both body builders.

Then, too, it's straight logic in these times to save what's scarce and to use what's more plentiful. While we may not have all the pork we want to use, there are lots more dry beans. This year's bean crop is the largest in history.

So it's more baked beans -- or beans anyway you like 'em. I say "baked" merely because they're the first ones to come to my mind.

And to help you think of different ways to use beans, the cheapest of all the protein foods, we offer the leaflet called "Dried Beans and Peas in Low-Cost Meals." To get it, write a post card to the U.S. Department of Agriculture,

Washington, D.C. Be sure to give your name and address, and also the name of the leaflet -- "Dried Beans and Peas in Low-Cost Meals."

Now for more information about dry beans. (Incidentally, did you know that whether to call them "dry" -- d-r-y -- or "dried" -- d-r-i-e-d -- causes quite a bit of friendly argument.)

Those who say it ought to be dry -- d-r-y -- take the stand that that is the way the bean grows. It drys right in the pod -- by Mother Nature's hand. It's dry when harvested, and doesn't require any artificial drying -- as say, dried apricots, dried eggs, or milk powder. And of course that's true.

But there are those who say these beans are dried, regardless of whether Mother Nature or some production-chemist or other inventor found the method. And, of course, that's reasonable too.

But we've got way off the track -- I wanted to say a little about the heat or fuel you use in baking beans. Of course, fuel -- whether it's oil, gas, electricity, or wood -- is something we want to conserve nowadays too. And dry beans to be good usually require a long, slow cooking. The length of the cooking time is bad as far as fuel goes -- unless you do some good planning and use the heat for something else at the same time. Of course, the slowness is good, so do remember to keep the heat low.

Of course, you may cook with a wood or coal stove that you keep going all day anyway. And in some sections of the country, though not many yet --you can buy dry beans that have been precooked so require just a short cooking before you serve them. Of course these use fuel somewhere along the production line, that's true. But a lot of beans are treated at the same time, so fuel isn't wasted.

And that reminds me of another idea that one of the marketing folks gave me. It seems it was really his wife's plan. And to tell you the truth the whole idea didn't start as a fuel saver, but as a good friendly neighbor scheme. It seems there are just two in this family, both fond of baked beans. But to bake beans

for just the two of them didn't strike her fancy. So she baked a big pan of beans, and let her neighbors know there'd be plenty to share if they wanted some. And now the plan has run into a regular Saturday trade. One Saturday, one neighbor bakes the beans and keeps an eye on them while she does her week-end cleaning. And come the next Saturday, it's another neighbor's turn. And so on for some time now. And I pass the idea along to you. Of course, the families using the plan wouldn't need to be small. One average oven is big enough to cook lots of beans.

Too, some enterprising homemaker who wants to increase the family income a little might turn the plan to good advantage. Especially if she knows many young couples, who both work. Women who work all day outside their homes will find it difficult to serve their own home-baked beans. And it seems to me they might like a spot where they could stop in and buy just what they want. Some delicatessen shops feature baked beans, as do some restaurants, especially on Saturday--good proof that there's a ready market for good baked beans. Well, there are a couple of ideas for fuel saving. And you'll probably think of many more.

Now about beans as a protein source. Of course among the protein foods, beans are the cheapest. You shouldn't eat them everyday and skip animal protein foods -- meat, eggs, milk, cheese -- for good and all. But you wouldn't want to anyway. Two or three times a week is not too often to serve beans in low-cost meals.

Now I haven't taken the time today to go into the different varieties of dry beans -- the pea beans -- great northerns, small white, limas, red kidneys, pintos, pinks, small reds, and on and on. That's a good topic for another day. Meanwhile, don't forget we have lots and lots of beans, that they're a good cheap protein food, and most everybody likes 'em.